1996 Census of Canada

Release #2

Age and Sex

NOVA SCOTIA

Finance
Fiscal & Economic Policy
Statistics

May, 1998

Gender

The number of males expressed as a percentage of the total population of the province has been declining for the past 25 years. In 1971 males represented 50.3% of the total population. This fell to 49.5% in 1981 through 49.1% in 1991 and in 1996 stood at 48.6%. Males continue to outnumber females in the younger age groups up to age nineteen, but this reverses from age twenty onwards and the trend becomes especially pronounced in the senior years of sixty five and above. In that group, females have a 58.8% representation which jumps to 71.2% for the population aged eighty five years and over. At the national level in 1996, males represented 49.2% of the total population and 42% of the population aged 65 and over.

Nova Scotia Population by Selected Age Groups, 1996 Census

Age	Male	Female	Total
0 - 14	92,115	87,990	180,105
15 - 24	61,955	61,720	123,675
25 - 44	140,530	146,930	287,460
45 - 64	98,630	100,300	198,930
65 - 74	29,225	35,550	64,775
75+	19,895	34,445	54,340

The Population is Ageing

Data from the 1996 Census confirm that the population in the province is ageing. There has been an increase in the population of those aged 35 years and over and a decrease in the under 35 year age group. When compared with the last census taken in 1991, the 35 year and older group increased 10.1% to number 467,610 while the under 35 year group contracted 7% over the same period to number 441,675. Comparing the recent data to census data from 1971 further illustrates this trend. Despite an overall population growth of 15.3% between 1971 and 1996, the under 35 year age group lost 8.9% of its population while the 35 year and over group had a population increase of 53.8%.

The senior population, aged 65 years and over, has been increasing in absolute number and as a percentage of the total population for the last 25 years. In 1971 there were 72,470 seniors in the province representing 9.2% of the total population. By 1996 that number had grown to 119,115 seniors representing 13.1% of the population. This is the highest percentage of seniors in Atlantic Canada and the third highest in Canada. This trend is evident in all provinces. At the national level the percentage of seniors has risen from 8.1% in 1971 to 12.2% in 1996.

The largest population increase since 1991 for any five year age group in the province was a 28.4% increase in the population of middle-aged 45-49 year olds while the greatest loss of population was a 20.0% drop in the young adult group of 25-29 year olds.

Numbers of Children are Declining

The size of the preschool population under five years of age has been declining in the province for the past quarter century. Despite a small 1.4% increase between 1986 and 1991, the population has declined 19.8% since 1971. The largest single drop happened in the latest five year period between 1991 and 1996 with an 8.4% loss of population in that age group. This trend runs parallel to declining birthrates and family sizes that have been especially evident over the later part of the twenty five year period.

The population of the primary aged school population (5 to 14 years) has also been falling since 1971. The decline amounted to 27.4% over the period. A significant difference between this group and the preschoolers was that this population increased by a slight 0.7% between 1991 and 1996 as opposed to the 8.4% drop in the number of preschoolers.

Working Age Population

The overall working age population, those aged 20 to 64, increased 2.4% since 1991. The growth rate in the senior working age group (aged 45-64) was 16.2% while the growth rate in the junior working age group (aged 20-44) was negative 4.1%. However, since 68% of the working age population is in the junior age group, this will ensure a high concentration of the most productive age groups in the labour force for the next decade.

The 30 to 49 year old group, commonly referred to as the "Baby Boomers", has increased from 42% of the total working age population in 1971 to 53.5% in 1996.

Additional Information

Statistics Canada's next scheduled release date for data from the 1996 Census is October 14, 1997. There will be data on marital and common-law status, as well as, the number, type and structure of families. Further information is available by contacting the Statistics Division, Nova Scotia Department of Finance by telephone: (902)424-5691, fax: (902)424-0714, E-mail: macleodb@gov.ns.ca, or visit our website at http://www.gov.ns.ca/fina/stats.div/.